

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION/THESIS/RESEARCH PAPER/CREATIVE PROJECT: The Rise and Fall of the Tuberculosis Sanitarium in Response to the White Plague

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American tuberculosis sanitarium architecture developed largely from trends set by European health spas and sanitarium design. The first American tuberculosis sanitariums largely resembled European health spas and resorts and catered to rich clientele. The spread of the White Plague, however, urged American states to develop sanitarium institutions that could provide for all classes. These first sanitariums melded nineteenth century resort architecture with radial prison designs and Kirkbride insane asylums to create large hospital complexes devoted exclusively to tuberculosis treatment and research. By the 1920s and 1930s, the European modernist movement had created modern tuberculosis sanitariums that inspired American sanitarium design. Despite the important role these institutions played in curing consumptives and limiting the spread of the White Plague, the increased use of drug therapy made sanitariums obsolete by the 1970s. Today, many of these sanitariums have been abandoned, demolished, or rehabilitated for new uses.